

Blessed Trinity/St. John Evangelist Joint Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 16, 2017

Blessed Trinity Church Hall

6:00 PM Dinner & Social Time/6:30-7:50 PM Meeting

Present: Blessed Trinity: Fr. Joe Dominic, Deb Hasler, Kitty Klich, Amy O'Rourke, Peggy Heili, John O'Dell, Terry Rotter, John Russell, Suzy Schmidtke, Sandy Jordan & Lynn Walvoort; and St. John Evangelist: Patricia Langel, James Beine, Lynn Justinger, Jill Ladwig, Susan Vavra, & Stephen Webster

Excused: Blessed Trinity: Jim O'Neill, Kris Raeder, & Ruth Pedroni and St. John Evangelist: Molly Holzrichter, Dale Neil, Scott Misfeldt, Matthew Meyer, Lori Udovich & Carol Benishek

Social/Meet & Greet: Thank you for the delicious meal provided by Blessed Trinity's Pastoral Council.

Opening Prayer: John O'Dell

Introductions

Welcoming Committee (Susan Vavra from St. John Evangelist):

- Blessed Trinity wants to be a more welcoming and open parish. Parishioners and committee members need to be more welcoming.
- Pastoral Council officers from both parishes met. St. John's shared some new welcoming ideas with Blessed Trinity.
- Susan Vavra is the Pastoral Council Liaison to the Welcoming Committee at St. John's.
- To welcome people attending Mass: Susan shared these ideas:
 - Be passionate: people will know if you are insincere
 - Have a genuine emotion when sharing with another person
 - Acknowledge people: "Hi" or Smile. Make eye contact
 - Make an effort to meet new people
 - Greet people and introduce yourself
 - A happy mood is more welcoming to people. Happiness is contagious.
 - Be excited to have them be a part of worship with you. We are all one body in Christ.
 - Share the peace of the Lord genuinely
 - Thank you for coming to Mass. (if a visitor) – Invite them to come back.
 - Look around you, across the aisle, smile – at someone you don't know or a friend.
 - Be sure to acknowledge children and their family. "Hi" to young people and families. Glad you are here.
 - We need to become a deeper "welcoming" place. Always BE JOYFUL!
 - St. John's started a suggestion box. Carol Benishek and Dale Neil (Pastoral Council Secretary) each have a key. The suggestions are brought to the Pastoral Council.
 - St. John's also has a Welcome Book for visitors to sign. A council member/parishioner is always near the Welcome Book to welcome them to the parish.
 - Every usher needs to greet people with a smile and say, "Good Morning" or "Good Evening" at the start of Mass, then wish the parishioner "a good or blessed week" as they leave. At the collection – a smile, "thank you", and eye contact is also recommended.
- Outside of the Liturgical environment:
 - When we meet people, who have left the parish, greet them. People need to feel they belong and are accepted. When you see people that haven't been to Mass for a long time, please welcome them: "How are you? We miss you." Invite them to a parish activity, festival, etc. However, be respectful of their choice. We are all Catholics and we should appreciate that they have found a place that meets their worshiping needs.

- Outside the church: parish events and festivals—invite all Catholic/Non.
- Kitty mentioned that Fr. Joe wants the new members to light the candles on the Advent wreath and also bring baby Jesus to be placed in the manger during the Christmas Masses. Kitty is calling the new members. They are very excited to be asked to be involved.
- Committees: Chairs need to contact all members that signed up. If members are not acknowledged, they feel isolated. They will not sign up in the future. You need to welcome the member and get their input. Be sure to welcome new members when they attend. Spend a little time getting to know them and introducing the other members to them. At times, “long time” members unknowingly exclude newer members. Remember everyone has a talent to share. A committee belongs to all members and is a form of stewardship. Personally, contact any interested person quickly. Refuse no one. All are welcome.
- Christmas Eve Mass: St. John’s will be sending a card to families with younger children informing them the nursery will be open during Mass.
- Patty mentioned that St. John’s did not go ahead with Barb Vite and the Archdiocese’s Parish Stewardship Assessment because they couldn’t get enough members to attend. St. John’s decided to create a survey. The survey was mailed to every adult and people who left the parish (up to 4 years). The surveys were sent back anonymous. St. John’s is still compiling the results. They are also keeping the parish aware of the upcoming changes that are a result of the survey.
- The new Welcoming Committee is a subcommittee of the Stewardship Commission. They have set their first 2 priorities: Newcomers/Families with children and Welcoming at Mass. It is a good idea to start small:
 - Newcomers: They have the most energy. Send a card and booklet to newcomer. Have a parish member be the liaison to the newcomer. When you stop for a visit, be welcoming and interested in what they did in their other parish. Recommend a committee for them to join. Bring the parish directory and any community information you have. Also, ask to take a photo of the newcomer/s and post it. Have a Welcome Newcomers coffee, pancake breakfast, etc. periodically.
 - In the liturgical setting, families including children will hand out bulletins 15 minutes before/after Mass.
 - Younger parishioners don’t feel qualified to volunteer for a committee. We need to work with the youth today to have a future tomorrow.
 - Kindergarten thru High School students also need to be helped to understand the need to be welcoming and involved in stewardship inside/outside of church.
- Stewards for Life: 80% of parishes were represented at the “Spirituality of Stewardship Conference for Leaders” on November 3/4 at the Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center in Milwaukee. Susan distributed a handout (attached) which is an adaptation of the Youth/RE Stewardship guidelines. Its purpose is to support the Archdiocese Synod 2014 on Stewardship as a Way of Life.

Joint Social Activities (Deb Hasler):

- Joint Social Activities are not fundraisers. They are opportunities to get to know people at both parishes.
- Let’s brainstorm ideas
- Best ideas come outside meetings
- For example, a bowling night
- Possible Joint Pastoral Council opportunities/social activities: potluck, Christmas gathering

Comments (Fr. Joe):

- Thank you for the great exchange of ideas, enthusiasm, and delicious food.
- The parish community is in good hands with their reps. Trust in God.
- Youth Pastoral Council Representation for Blessed Trinity and St. John's: The youth will recruit 2 youths (girl/boy, 2 boys, or 2 girls) for each parish. The youth do not have voting rights.
- Feast Days bring parishes together. Processions are important. There is greater intervention:
 - St. John Evangelist patron feast is December 27. It is too late for 2017. Since the date is close to Christmas, you should plan for a date in 2018.
 - Blessed Trinity's feast is the Most Holy Trinity.
 - Each feast day, the other parish is invited to participate in the feast.
- According to the Archdiocese, Pastoral Council Secretaries must take the minutes at the Pastoral Council meetings. If Sandy Jordan (Blessed Trinity's Parish Administrative Assistant)/Carol Benishek (St. John's Office Administrator) takes the minutes, it is a conflict of interest. Starting in January, each Pastoral Council Secretary will start taking minutes. Sandy/Carol can prepare their respective Pastoral Council packets and help the Pastoral Councils with other items. Sandy/Carol can attend their respective Pastoral Council meeting as Staff Liaisons.
- Parishioners are invited to attend the Pastoral Council meetings. They are unable to vote. If a parishioner wants to be on the agenda, they must contact the chair before the monthly agenda is prepared. Parishioners can voice their concerns to the Pastoral Council members.

Closing Prayer: John O'Dell

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Jordan

Parish Administrative Assistant/Pastoral Council Note Taker

Attachment: Susan Vavra's Handout

JOINT PASTORAL COUNCIL

Blessed Trinity / St John Evangelist

November 16, 2017

STEWARDSHIP: Welcoming – an integral part of our lives as stewards

We need to change...

1. Stewardship is a way of life & spirituality. Not a program or process. We do not need another program.
2. The parish doesn't own its disciples. About ALL aspects of life. Go to where we are – daily life. Bring Jesus to everything we do: Welcoming in family, church, work, wherever we are, whoever we meet.
3. Stewardship can't be all about money BUT it is important. Giving or tithing is NOT a chore but a gift. Not an action but a habit.
4. Jesus is the reason for all seasons. Seeing Jesus in everyone at all times.
5. A Stewardship parish must have a mission to transform the world around us. We all want to belong to something that is important. We want others to share in our joy.

WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

1. The challenge to follow Jesus no matter the cost.
2. The choice commitment leads to a way of life (habits), not a series of actions.
3. The vision: We are Committed.

KEY: 6 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EVERYDAY STEWARD:

1. Mindfulness: Awareness of Jesus is everywhere, not just in church.
2. Prayfulness: How do we pray? Talk to Jesus? Ways, places, when, how. Pray always.
3. Gratefulness: Being thankful. All comes from God.
4. Graciousness: Receiving goodness from others. Knowing we are valued.
5. Committed: Not once in a while, always, present, always stewards
6. Accountable: Knowing we will be called to account. How have we welcomed all that we've met?

THE ROAD TO EFFECTIVE WELCOMING. (Closely connected to 6 Characteristics)

1. Determine the goal. Ex: Our parish will work to include & welcome all who enter our doors.
2. Invite the parishioners to share personal experiences. Witnessing. Ex. "Tell us about a time you experienced the love of Christ after doing something for someone else."
3. (KEY): Deliver the Message: This begins the 'mindfulness' See **Jesus in EVERYONE.**
4. Provide as many opportunities as possible for discovery of mindfulness, prayfulness, gratefulness, and graciousness. All committees, activities, outreach programs, etc.
5. Action of Response: Now what? Discuss or brainstorm how each parish liturgy, RE, committee, activity, etc. can continue to welcome. Develop a follow up process.

Remember: ALL that we do should be done in **JOY!**

Adapted from: **Spirituality of Stewardship: November 3, 2017**

Workshop: Leading Our Sons & Daughters Toward an Everyday Stewardship

Tracey Earl Welliver

(Director of Parish Community & Engagement, Liturgical Publications)

There is a guideline sheet for Religious Education and Helping our Youth to be Stewards for Life. Contact me if you would like a copy or are interested in how to integrate it into your RE program.

If you have any ideas, thoughts, or questions, workshops, please feel free to call or e-mail me!!

Susan Vavra

920-254-0898

iamsgtv@yahoo.com